

**From:** [Sierra Club Membership Services](#) on behalf of [Gretchen Smurr](#)  
**To:** [Scoping\\_Delta\\_Plan@Delta\\_Council](#)  
**Subject:** Delta Plan Scoping Comments  
**Date:** Sunday, January 23, 2011 3:35:50 PM

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Jan 23, 2011

Chair Philip Isenberg  
CA

Dear Chair Isenberg,

We can't continue to abuse this life giving resource that we all rely on. Water levels must be maintained and agriculture needs to change to crops that can be sustainably grown on less water. Water should not be sent south to the detriment of this ecosystem. As a teacher who has raised salmon in the classroom for the last ten years, I have noticed the serious decline in the number of salmon in recent years. Salmon can be considered a signal species for the health of this eco system. Let's be a model of how to steward our delta in a responsible way so that all of us may live healthier lives. This is an important moment for the Sacramento-San Joaquin Bay-Delta ecosystem and the Delta Stewardship Council. The Bay-Delta's ecosystem is in a state of ongoing collapse and there are concerns regarding the long-term physical stability of the Delta. Drafting a visionary and effective Delta Plan will require the careful consideration of a wide range of alternative actions, including significant new directions in water management.

The Council should clearly recognize that the Bay-Delta estuary is over-appropriated and that ecosystem restoration will require stronger flow standards and reductions in average annual diversions. I recommend that the Council use the following broad recommendations to guide the development of the draft Delta Plan and a draft EIR that analyzes a broad set of alternatives.

1. Guarantee Fresh Water to Support & Restore the Delta Ecosystem: The Bay-Delta ecosystem is a national and statewide resource critical to California's economic health, to the plants, animals, birds and fish that live here, and to the health of our communities.

2. Enforce Existing Water Pollution Control Laws: Commit to full implementation and enforcement of state and federal laws to protect both surface water and groundwater quality. The state is failing to meet existing standards to protect Bay-Delta surface water and groundwater quality, and is lagging in the development of new standards and pollutant loads needed to ensure the health of the estuary's waters. Contaminants such as salt, selenium, mercury, nutrients and pesticides pollute drinking water and damage the health of the Delta, and the damage is mounting.

3. Reducing Reliance on the Delta: Recognize that California has dramatic opportunities to invest in regional water supplies (e.g. agricultural and urban conservation, waste water recycling, groundwater management and urban storm water capture) that can allow the state to meet its future needs, while simultaneously facilitating the restoration of the Delta ecosystem.

4. More Water Exports Should Not be Promised before Safe Limits are Established: Existing export of fresh water flows from the Bay-Delta estuary should be contingent on ensuring sufficient water to support and restore the Bay-Delta ecosystem in perpetuity; and

5. Reduce Risks to people and property by determining a safe yield for water exports: A "water grab" that allows more water exports from the Bay-Delta estuary, ignoring the restraints of nature, expanding exports by promising unrealistic inflated quantities of water does not promote reliability, it promotes conflict. Providing water to areas south of the Delta must protect the habitat, local economies of the Sierra, Northern California, Delta and the San Joaquin River regions.

6. Enforce water rights: Don't allow politically-connected and powerful interests to sell publicly owned water supplies at a profit while damaging surrounding communities and their water supplies.

7. Protect Taxpayers: Taxpayers and ratepayers must not be soaked again -- either through bonds or direct payments for the costs of exporting this water. Any plan adopted to export water out of the Delta from the Northern California and Sierra watersheds must be cost effective and ensure those exporting water from the Bay-Delta estuary can pay the mitigation costs, design, and capital costs.

Thank you for considering the above comments. I look forward to following the work of the Council as it develops the Delta Plan.

Sincerely,

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